

Northfield Open Space Committee
Minutes – May 20, 2021 – Via Zoom

Present: Julia Blyth, Robin Conley, Joanne McGee, Sue Space, Jenny Tufts,

Absent: Jerry Wagener

Also attending: Michelle Gamache, Bee Jacque

Items in italics demand action prior to the next meeting.

1. Solar siting bylaw: Jenny and Sue reviewed their draft memo about solar siting which outlines potential impacts of solar arrays on open space, farmland, forestland, and wildlife habitat using content from the Open Space and Recreation Plan and Master plan. The expectation is that the Planning Board will use this memo to strengthen the existing solar siting bylaw. Members suggested adding the BioMap2 map since it was mentioned in the memo. Members also suggested an opening sentence and cover letter outlining the purpose of the memo prior to meeting with the Planning Board. Since there will be a fall town meeting with other articles about bylaw changes, the Open Space Committee needs to meet with the Planning Board soon to allow time for public hearings. *Julia will draft a cover letter and opening sentence for review by the committee and send it to the Planning Board.*
2. Mosquito control issue: Bee explained the difficulties and challenges with the Massachusetts mosquito control requirements. It is not easy to opt out of spraying, and membership in the Pioneer valley Mosquito District is also problematic. The state requires five years of historic mosquito data among other requirements. The Selectboard voted not to opt out because it had no plan (due to short timeline), the possibility of financial liability, and the expectation of a new state report due in August. Andrea, town administrator, and Bee will work with FRCOG and other towns about the need for more funding.
3. April 20 minutes: Approved. Sue/Robin 5-0.
4. FY 21 purchases: Members voted to authorize Julia to spend money for additional trail brochures, plaque engraving, and website development. Jenny/Joanne 5-0.
5. PVRS biology/beaver pond trail update: Robin is now in contact with the PVRS team which includes John Lepore (former science teacher), Nikki Pullen (ecology and environmental science) Matt and some students.
6. Mill Brook trail update: Conservation Commission approved the proposal and is awaiting word from the DEP which has concerns about bog bridges. Julia has talked with the Sewer

Commission which has right of way on the Sunshine Trail, but needs to follow up. Because lumber prices have skyrocketed in the last few months, our proposal and grant from the CPA may not cover all the work. Julia will reach out to some local loggers for lumber donations and/or better prices. The “bridge to nowhere” at the marsh crossing is a priority. As soon as we have a date, we will ask for volunteers.

7. Adjournment: The committee adjourned at 8:45. The next meeting is scheduled for June 15, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne McGee, Secretary

FRCOG - Franklin Regional Council of Governments
DEP – Department of Environmental Protection